

CNN

## Congressman Requests Justice Dept. Investigation of BCS

by Dierdre Walsh  
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**WASHINGTON**— It may not top the list of Obama administration priorities, but Hawaii Democratic Congressman Neil Abercrombie is urging the president-elect to take on one more controversial issue — creating a new playoff system for college football.

Obama himself has already waded into the debate. In a 60 Minutes interview on CBS last month, he said he would push for a championship playoff system — adding three weeks to the current college football schedule — to replace the current Bowl Championship Series (BCS). "I'm gonna throw my weight around a little bit. I think it's the right thing to do," Obama said.

Critics of the current BCS model argue that it gives a competitive and financial advantage to schools in the six BCS conferences and excludes schools with equally good or better football records in the other five non-BCS college football conferences. BCS-sponsored bowl games at the end of the season generate hundreds of millions of dollars of revenue for the schools who are selected to play in them.

Seizing on Obama's public support of a new system, Abercrombie wrote a letter to the president-elect last month urging him to have the Department of Justice investigate the issue. "With the prestige of the Presidency and vigorous pursuit by the Department of Justice in support of fairness and equity, we are certain the BCS will be persuaded to resolve the issues to the benefit of the nation's colleges and their fans."

New BCS rankings released on Sunday reignited the controversy among college football fans when the University of Oklahoma edged out the University of Texas for a chance to play in the championship game, despite having an identical 11-1 record this season. Abercrombie released a statement on Tuesday, arguing that the current situation "very clearly constitutes a restraint of trade."

"Replacing the Bowl Championship Series with a process that allows the NCAA Division I football National Championship to be decided on the field is a matter of sportsmanship and a matter of equity," Abercrombie said.

Abercrombie, along with Republican Reps. Lynn Westmoreland of Georgia and Mike Simpson of Idaho, and Democrat Jim Matheson of Utah, introduced a non-binding resolution in April directing DOJ to investigate the BCS system and take appropriate step if it found illegal action.

